The major achievements in respect of mapping and assessment of polymetallic nodules from the allocated area are as follows :

India was awarded the status of Pioneer Investor and was allocated an Area of 1.50,000 square kilometer in Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB).

Detailed multibeam bathymetry mapping, survey and sampling area in CIOB has been carried out and resources potential estimated.

Based on survey, India retained 75,000 square kilometer of area and completed the entire obligation as a Pioneer Investor.

(c) During the year 2003-04, efforts will be continued to ascertain the results obtained earlier for preparation of maps.

Under polymetallic nodule programme, it is proposed to carry out close grid surveys of the retained Area to undertake detailed studies to update the database and the estimates of resources for identification of first generation mine site.

Contract to Private Firm for Maintenance of Railway Stations

5206. SHRI DATTA MEGHE :
PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a private firm would keep Old Delhi Railway Station and footover bridges clean as appeared in the media recently;

(b) if so, the complete details thereof;

(c) whether Government would consider awarding similar contracts for the maintenance and upkeep of prominent and crowded railway station in different parts of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) to (d) Though contract for mechanized cleaning and upkeep of platforms and other passenger usage areas has been awarded in respect of Old Delhi Railway Station, the work has not yet started. The Zonal Railways have been empowered to undertake such activities at other important stations within their jurisdiction.

Renewal of Contract of M/s. A. H. Wheeler & CO.

5207. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to reply to Starred Question 185 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st December, 2000 and state :

(a) whether the Contract for Bookstalls of M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. has since been renewed;

(b) if so, what are the Complete details thereof; and

(e) if not by when it will be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The extant policy on bookstalls is under review. The renewal of contract of M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. can only be considered after the policy is finalised.

Transportation of Fodder to Gujarat

5208. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ :
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA :
DR. A. K. PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of railway rakes requested by Gujarat Government for transportation of fodder to scarcity affected areas in the last four months of December to March;

(b) what is the number allocated by the Railways against the above requirement; and

(c) in view of the acute scarcity of fodder in the scarcity districts of Gujarat, will the Railway Ministry consider the seriousness of the situation and allocate the required number of rakes ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) Railway rakes are provided as per the indents registered with the Railways. From December, 2002 to March, 2003, 89 rakes were loaded for transportation of fodder to Gujarat and 43 indents were pending at the end of March, 2003. Efforts have been made to provide were empty rakes for loading of fodder for Gujarat scarcity affected areas.

Bookstalls at Railway Stations

5209. Dr. (MS.) P. SELVIE DAS :
SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that new contract of bookstalls are allotted to eligible categories through normal set procedure by inviting applications through press notification;